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STATE FOR AF/S, DRL  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER

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SUBJECT: LABOR RESPONSE AWAITS CONSENSUS

REF: HARARE 1621

1. (SBU) Summary. Since the deadline has passed on the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions' (ZCTU) July 29 ultimatum to the GOZ demanding resolution of the cash crisis (reftel), no threatened "unspecified action" has materialized. It now appears that a ZCTU National Council meeting will not take place until August 30. Given that the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) holds its annual congress beginning September 12, this may delay retaliatory action until late September. End summary.

2. (SBU) After the ZCTU's demand that the GOZ resolve the ongoing cash crisis, speculation about the threatened stayaway has filled the press. However, labor sources report that much of the senior leadership has been out of the country rallying international support for ZCTU's position. The Secretary-General has been in Australia, consulting with colleagues; the Vice-President and Assistant Secretary-General have been consulting with associates in

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South Africa. Lovemore Matombo, the President of the ZCTU, reports that the ZCTU has received a groundswell of support from its international labor colleagues. However, while he does not commit to action by a certain date, he hopes to translate these assurances into tangible support for the ZCTU's next action.

3. (SBU) A National Council meeting is expected on August 30, when all of the leaders will have returned to Zimbabwe. Although Matombo previously stated that mass action could be commenced within five days of that meeting, COSATU's national congress in mid-September might slow things down considerably. As stated reftel, ZCTU remains aware that yet another stayaway, without some new pressure, will probably fail to bring any resolution. If the ZCTU plans to call on COSATU to support a stayaway by joining in an effort to close the border, it may have to wait until its South African counterpart is not otherwise occupied.

4. (SBU) Comment. No concrete plans for another mass action have yet been revealed. There is no end in sight to the ongoing cash crisis, and the situation continues to deteriorate for the rank-and-file workers. The ZCTU has somewhat painted itself into a corner, promising a response when it was fairly apparent that the GOZ lacks the will to resolve the cash crisis. If, as suspected, the ZCTU plans to call on COSATU in a joint response, that call could be delayed until late September. End comment.

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